

Oakland Museum show offers Deion another kind of ego trip

Photo shows stars who honored city

OMEONE should take Deion Sanders of the Dallas Cowboys to the Oakland Museum next week. It might help temper his ego.

When Sanders takes the field today in Tempe, Ariz., the self-aggrandizing defensive back will make his second straight Super Bowl appearance, a first for a dual sport athlete.

BY JEFFREY D. HARRISON

On Friday, the Oakland Museum unveils "People, Politics, Protest and Promise: African Americans in the News," an exhibition of 41 photographs culled largely from a collection of more than 1 million images recently donated by The Oakland Tribune. One picture in that show could help put Deion Sanders in his place.

The exhibition, coinciding with the museum's annual recognition of Black History Month, is divided into six topical categories: people, sports, politics, the war years, protest and promise.

Under the sports category, curators Roger Birt of San Francisco State University and Marcia Eymann of the museum staff selected a shot from 1949 that Sanders might relate to.

It shows Billy Martin, the feisty baseball player from Berkeley, greeting that season's Oakland All-City football team on his way to a legendary career in the major leagues.

No fewer than four members of that team were dual sport stars in their own right. George Najarian, a lineman on the Oakland High School football team, also led the city in scoring as captain of the basketball team.

Three others preceded Sanders as stars in both football and baseball. That trio — Dave Mann of Castlemont High and Marion Sims and Cliff Wainwright of McClymonds — also happen to be African American.

Marin was a running back for the Castlemont Knights football team and an All-City pitcher for the baseball team. Between seasons, he played basketball.

Sims was the leading receiver for the McClymonds Warriors, catching passes thrown by Wainwright, Oakland's first black All-City quarterback. On the baseball team, Sims played shortstop. Wainwright was in left field. Both made the All-City baseball squad as well.

One by one, scouts from the professional leagues arrived in Oakland to survey the trio's talent. Jackie Robinson broke baseball's color line two years before and sports fran-



Steven Lavoie

Time capsule

ches scrambled to find their own black stars. The plug of Mann, Sims and Wainwright helped spread the word in the sports world that Oakland had emerged as a rich source of black athletic talent.

The All-City trio sent another message — that Oakland's black athletes had more to offer than their prowess on the field.

When recruiters from Oregon State University approached Mann after graduation in 1950, he accepted their scholarship to play football with the Beavers. In exchange, he broke OSU's all-time single-game record as a sophomore when he gained 233 yards in a non-conference contest against Utah.

But his grades slipped and he lost his college eligibility. The Oakland Oaks baseball team of the old Pacific Coast League jumped at the chance to sign the hometown hero. On June 9, 1952, Mann became the first black athlete from the Oakland schools to appear in a professional game when he came in to pinch-hit against the Sacramento Selons. His clutch hit helped the Oaks beat the Selons that afternoon.

During the 1953 season, Mann was drafted by the Army. During basic training at Ft. Ord, he was drafted once more — this time by the National Football League.

The Chicago Cardinals, a team now based in Arizona, made Mann their seventh pick in the 1954 amateur draft, hailing the halfback as the "next great rookie to come to the NFL." He lasted three seasons in the Cardinals' backfield before heading to the Canadian league.

Sims and Wainwright had other agendas. Despite the dogged appeals of talent-hungry scouts, both

men rejected careers in professional sports. They embarked instead on their own paths to glory of another kind.

Wainwright saw the housing problems faced by black people in the East Bay, many of whom were thrown out of skilled jobs in the defense industry at the end of World War II to face the discriminatory practices of real estate brokers and mortgage lenders.

Oakland's first black All-City quarterback decided to open a real estate office of his own, in the burgeoning Eastmont district of East Oakland where many black families sought housing. He found homes for thousands of families. In 1969, his colleagues rewarded his success by electing him the first black president of the California Association of Real Estate Brokers.

Sims turned his attention toward Oakland's children. In 1952, he put his athletic skills to work as the physical education director at the Oakland Boys Club at 24th and Market streets. For many years, he would use that club to foster Oakland's reputation as a source for a special kind of athlete.

Hall-of-Famers Frank Robinson and Bill Russell came through that Boys Club. Robinson would later become the first black manager in Major League Baseball history and Russell became the National Basketball Association's first black head coach. Curt Flood, Paul Silas, and Dave Stewart followed. Each set new standards among athletes for service to their fellow man.

Unlike Sanders, no one on that 1949 All-City football squad would appear in back-to-back championship games.

None would earn his big salaries or garner all the attention he attracts.

Instead, they stayed close to home and helped to make their city a city of champions.

Time Capsule is a regular Sunday feature of The Oakland Tribune. If you have comments or suggestions, please call 208-6420.

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"People, Politics, Protest, and Promise: African Americans in the News" continues at the **Oakland Museum of California**, 1000 Oak St. It consists of 41 photographs from the files of The Oakland Tribune, and focuses on the ways African Americans have been represented in the media over 75 years. Drawn from a recent gift to the museum of more than 1 million photographs from the newspaper's archives, the exhibit offers a vivid slice of African-American life since the 1920s. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. 238-3401. **DAN PITTON**

Focus on Tribune archives

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As part of its exhibition "People, Politics, Protest and Promise: African Americans in the News," the **Oakland Museum of California** presents a slide lecture this weekend with San Francisco State University Professor Rodger C. Birt.

A humanities and American studies professor, Birt discusses photographs as historical evidence and as products of the photographer's art.

The **exhibit** includes photos drawn from The **Oakland Tribune** archives.

Birt's lecture begins at 2 p.m. on Sunday in the museum's Lecture Hall, 1000 Oak St. in Oakland. A reception follows. Admission to the museum is free Sunday. For more information, call 238-3401.



THE OAKLAND TRIBUNE COLLECTION

Paul Robeson leads Moore Shipyard workers in singing "The Star Spangled Banner" in support of the war effort in Sept. 1942. The photograph is part of "People, Politics, Protest and Promise: African Americans in the News."

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Photographs and memories

(Oakland) Museum
Oakland exhibit focuses on 100 years of African Americans in the news

By Jolene Thym

STAFF WRITER

THE photograph is dated June 4, 1966. Pfc. Clairborne L. Shaw of Oakland, a rifle across his lap, takes a drink from his canteen as he sits next to a cardboard sign: "Oakland, Calif.: 11,000 mi."

The photograph, taken at Chu Lai in Vietnam, is one of the thousands of images from the Vietnam War that are included in the vast Oakland Tribune archives, presented as a gift last year to the Oakland Museum of California.

A priceless record of the East Bay and its residents, the archives consist of more than a million images on paper, film and on glass that tell the story of the last 100 years in the region.

The first exhibition of works from the archive, "People, Politics, Protest, and Promise: African Americans in the News," continues through May 19 in the History Special Gallery at the Oakland Museum.

A moving tribute presented in the spirit of Black History Month, the exhibition consists of 41 photographs spanning seven decades. The show was co-curated by photo archivist Marcia Eymann and historian Rodger Birt of Oakland.

"The idea of this show is to highlight the presence of African Americans in East Bay life and also to focus on the artistry of the photography," said Birt.



KEITH DENNISON photo

Black Panthers march to protest the arrest of Huey Newton in July 1968.

Please see People, C-5

ances professor at San Francisco State University.

"When we first started this project, we expected that it would be difficult to find images of African Americans, but we were surprised. What we found is a rich shared history, a common bond between people (of all races)."

The show is divided into six sections, the first devoted to action images and portraits of well-known and regular citizens who have demonstrated, as Birt puts it, "the excellence that is possible in all of us." Other sections focus on African Americans in sports and politics, participating in protests, celebrating and mourning.

A 1993 photograph shows a pall-bearer for Baraka Hull, a crime suspect who was shot by police a week before his 20th birthday, being comforted by a friend. Hull was a nephew of Mark Curry, star of "Hangin' With Mr. Cooper."

Other images in the show include the first African-American school teacher in California, Ida Louise Jackson (1953); Dave Stewart pitching for the Oakland Athletics (1990); and Frank Robinson of the Giants, the first African-American manager in baseball (1984).

Newspaper stories

Although all of the pictures are accompanied by succinct explanations of their context, a binder in the gallery includes reproductions of the newspaper stories that accompanied the photographs.

"We wanted to be able to offer the opportunity for people to read the story because these photographs weren't made as fine art," Birt said. "They were made in the context of photojournalism."

Birt said he was surprised at the wealth of photographs taken of African Americans in the early 1900s, given the racial climate of the times. He was less surprised to find that women were not very well represented.

"We had to go back through the archives in search of images of women. We didn't want this to be a room full of African-American men. We also wanted children represented."

Some of the exhibit's livelier



THE OAKLAND TRIBUNE COLLECTION
A long way from home, Pfc. Clairborne L. Shaw of Oakland at Chu Lai, Vietnam, on June 4, 1966.

TICKETS

- **"People, Politics, Protest, and Promise: African Americans in the News,"**
excerpts from the Oakland Tribune photo archive
- Today through May 19
- Oakland Museum of California, History Special Gallery, 1000 Oak St., Oakland
- 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Wednesday through Saturday and noon to 7 p.m.
- Sunday
- \$5, \$3 seniors and students
- 238-3401

images of protests were taken by anonymous photographers. Many never made it into print, particularly those documenting pickets at the Oakland Tribune.

One of the most compelling protest photographs shows longshoremen on a strike march in front of the Fairmont Hotel in San Fran-

cisco. President Harry S. Truman stands on the hotel steps.

"We don't really know why this was never published. It's the strongest image in the show," Eymann said.

Eymann, who admitted that in the beginning, she balked at the idea of putting together an exhibit so soon after acquiring the archive, said she is overwhelmed with the wealth of history in the archives.

Oversized material

"We had 250 boxes of oversized material that we have been sorting and cataloging. That is in addition to 100 file cabinets."

The archive had become so large and bulky that some executives at The Alameda Newspaper Group considered throwing it away. But Oakland Tribune librarian Steve Lavoie insisted that the archive be saved.

"It was really Steve who spoke out to save this from the dumpster," Eymann said. The museum, she added, treats the archive as it would one very large work.

"To take it apart randomly would destroy its (essence)," she said. "We intend to archivally preserve every bit of it."